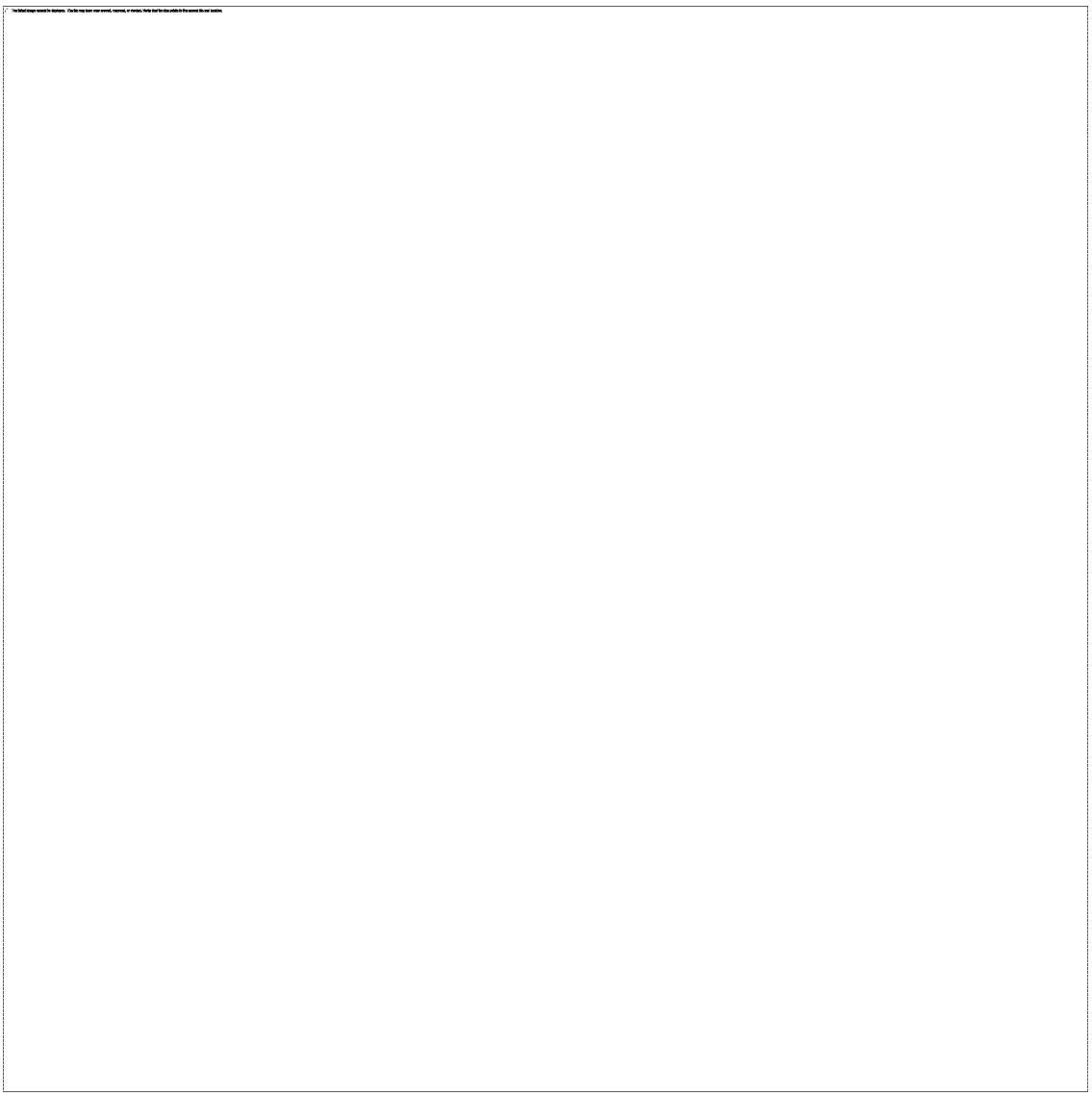
Message

From: Land Veritas Mitigation Banks [bankmanager@landveritas.com]
Sent: 1/3/2023 5:59:42 PM
To: Mahdavi, Sarvy [Mahdavi.Sarvy@epa.gov]
Subject: Land Veritas Mitigation Banks Winter Newsletter

Land Veritas Mitigation Banks Winter Newsletter



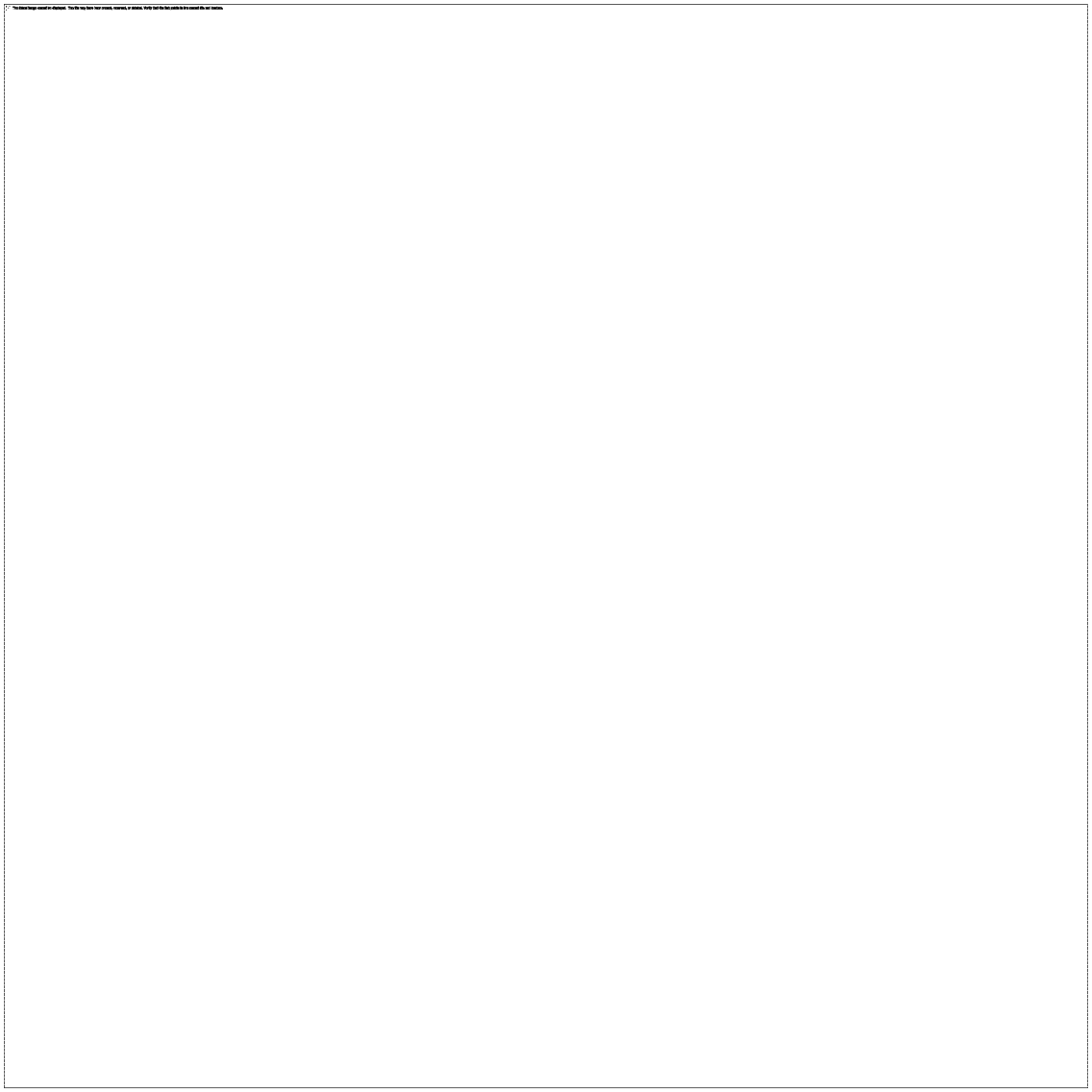
Land Veritas Winter Newsletter

Happy New Year from Land Veritas!

Toyon (Heteromeles arbutifolia) at Soquel Canyon Mitigation Bank

The holiday spirit was shining bright at Soquel Canyon Mitigation Bank with fruiting Toyon. Sometimes called Christmas berry, Toyon is not only festive, but its fruit provides a tasty food source to mammals and birds at the Bank. Hoping everyone had a happy holiday season and wishing everyone a happy new year from Land Veritas!

Cats Caught on Camera



A mountain lion photographed at the Elizabeth Lake portion of the Bank property via a motion activated camera (left) and a bobcat photographed via field staff monitoring the Petersen Ranch portion of the Bank property (right)

Petersen Ranch Mitigation Bank (Bank) is located within important wildlife migratory corridors and provides suitable habitat for various wildlife, including special status species like mountain lion (*Puma concolor*). Mountain lion was first documented at the Elizabeth Lake portion of the Bank property back in 2019 via a motion activated camera (see left photo above). The Southern California/Central Coast Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) of the mountain lion population has recently been petitioned for listing under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), and while under consideration will receive full

CESA protection as a candidate species. Protection under CESA means impacts to this species' habitat will now be regulated. The Bank has suitable mountain lion habitat present, is within the proposed boundary of the southern California/Central Coast ESU, and can help provide critical habitat to meet landscape connectivity conservation goals for the species. Because of these factors and documented occurrences, the Bank could potentially be considered suitable and occupied mountain lion habitat and therefore may be able to support future compensatory mitigation for permitted impacts to this species. Although the Bank does not yet offer mountain lion mitigation credits, unincorporated areas of the Bank may provide unique species mitigation opportunities.

But mountain lions aren't the only cats who enjoy spending time at the Bank; a bobcat was also recently spotted while field staff were monitoring at the Petersen Ranch portion of the Bank (see right photo above). Largely nocturnal, it was lucky our biologist was able to see one early in the morning! Bobcats inhabit a diverse array of habitats in southern California, have ranges of up to 25 square miles, and play a key role in local food webs by controlling small prey populations, such as rabbits and rodents. The Petersen Ranch Mitigation Bank offers plenty of food, space, and habitat diversity for bobcats and may serve as non-urban refugia for local bobcats increasingly affected by human development.

Joshua Tree Pilot Program at Petersen Ranch Mitigation Bank

Transplanted Western Joshua Tree at Petersen Ranch Mitigation Bank

A western Joshua tree (*Yucca brevifolia*; WJT) pilot translocation program launched this fall at Petersen Ranch Mitigation Bank (Bank). This pilot program provides a unique opportunity to learn and gather important data on translocation and conservation for WJT, a California Endangered Species Act (CESA) candidate species. Following permit approval from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), over 25 WJT were translocated to the Bank to examine survivorship of the species just outside its natural range. As climate change is predicted to reduce the range of WJT, translocation to areas with higher elevation and cooler temperatures like Petersen Ranch may provide important data on capacity for range expansion and serve as a strategy for

species conservation. The Bank has approximately 2,500 acres not yet under conservation easement which provides an exciting opportunity for species research, conservation, and mitigation.

Final Performance Standards Met at the Southern California Edison Mitigation Site

In 2014, a 320-acre conservation easement was recorded on the Petersen Ranch portion of the Petersen Ranch Mitigation Bank property to rehabilitate 0.50 acres of Waters of the U.S. as a mitigation solution for Southern California Edison (SCE). Implementation of rehabilitating the site began in 2015 and included planting native wetland species, invasive species management, and removing cattle from the stie. The SCE mitigation site performed well throughout its performance monitoring period and in 2021 the Notice of Completion was approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, marking this mitigation project complete – a major milestone!

Come Tour the Banks!

Land Veritas is scheduling tours at Soquel Canyon and Petersen Ranch Mitigation Banks again! Bank tours are a great opportunity to see restoration on the ground and discuss with mitigation experts how current and future mitigation needs can be satisfied. If interested in visiting either Bank, tours can be scheduled by emailing bankmanager@landveritas.com. We are currently coordinating tours starting in Spring 2023.

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